
S K E T C H
OF THE
SECRET HISTORY
OF
E U R O P E
SINCE THE PEACE OF PARIS.

(PRICE ONE SHILLING.)

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A
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SECRET HISTORY
OF
K E U R O P E
SINCE THE PEACE OF PARIS;
WITH
O B S E R V A T I O N S
ON THE
PRESENT CRITICAL STATE OF
G R E A T B R I T A I N .

O proceres, cenfore opus est, an haruspice nobis?

JUVENAL.

L O N D O N :
PRINTED FOR J. MURRAY, N° 32, FLEET STREET.
M DCC LXXII.

A
 SKETCH
 OF THE
 SECRET HISTORY
 OF
 EUROPE
 SINCE THE PEACE OF PARIS
 WITH
 OBSERVATIONS
 ON THE
 PRESENT CRITICAL STATE OF
 GREAT BRITAIN



O printed, copper-plate, and engraving
 J. G. A. L.

L O N D O N
 Printed for J. Murray, No. 32, Fleet Street
 M DCC LXXXI

S K E T C H
OF THE
SECRET HISTORY
OF
EUROPE, &c.

IT is not my intention by the following observations and anecdotes to add fewel to the animosities that for some time past have embarrassed government, and disgraced the nation. To accuse the ministry of inability or corruption, because their conduct in too many instances may

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appear

appear feeble and indecisive, is the part of an illiberal partizan. They are men, and are fallible; they may be misled in their informations; they may be mistaken in their reasonings; but surely every English nobleman of common sense and discernment, is too deeply penetrated with a sense of the invaluable privileges he enjoys as the member of a free state, and as a legislator, to sacrifice them to any partial consideration. Yet English noblemen may be so addicted to their pleasures, or so involved in unimportant pursuits, as to afford themselves little leisure for investigations of consequence. The study of politics is not so obvious as many are apt to imagine. The study of modern politics in particular, where the interests of so many great nations are to be minutely ballanced and compared, the characters of their rulers accurately scrutinized by a judicious attention to every step in their conduct, and the tendency of events precisely

cisely calculated, is exceedingly difficult and complex. No man therefore, whose time is dedicated to the toilette, the turf, or the gaming table, is qualified to be prime minister of the British kingdoms. But though I cannot attribute the contempt with which foreign nations treat the counsels of Great Britain to the corruption or inability of our ministers, I think it my duty to give my countrymen warning that they are contemned, and that the present state of affairs in Europe is highly critical. Unconnected and unacquainted with the great, I cannot communicate my sentiments to men in power, so as to procure their attention, but by the press; and as I am conscious of no prepossessions, nor of any malevolent intentions, I flatter myself that no expression shall escape me unbecoming the zeal of a Briton animated with the love of his country, unbecoming the candour of an

honest man, or the respect due to my superiors.

It is with peculiar pleasure that I recall the attention of my readers to the events of the last war; a period glorious and full of instruction. By the harmony that subsisted among the British kingdoms, and by the steadiness and unanimity of our counsels, we were victorious in every part of the world. No unhappy rebellions distracted the attention of government; for Scotland, no longer devoted to an inauspicious connection, concurred in the common cause, furnished above sixty thousand men against the enemies of her religion and liberty, and proved, by a vigorous and continued exertion, that an union with England was for the benefit of both nations. Thus Great Britain alone, and unassisted by any foreign ally, baffled the united efforts of the house of Bourbon,

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protected Prussia and Portugal, and concluded a glorious war by an honourable peace.

It was not however to be expected, that France, the most restless nation on the continent, ambitious and full of resources, stung with the sense of their late disgraces, and the memory of past renown, should submit with indifference to have her empire broken, and her glory tarnished. Smarting with recent pain, burning with resentment, and resolved on vengeance, her submission was merely temporary : and she availed herself of the respite she had so dearly purchased, to prepare herself for another war. Whoever reflects on the genius of that active nation, will acknowledge the probability of this account. The duke de Choiseul, a man of capacity, but of infamous manners, proud, vindictive, ambitious, and intriguing, was the
spirit

spirit that actuated the political machine, and who from Madrid to St. Petersburg, from Constantinople to the Gulf of Bothnia, governed and directed its movements. For while every foreign gazette was filled with exaggerated accounts of the disordered state of the French finances, immense sums of money were transmitted by the court of Versailles to Poland, Turkey, Sweden, and perhaps to Britain. The design proposed by the duke de Choiseul was perfect in all its parts, and had it been carried into execution, must have given us a severer shock than we ever sustained. But the divine providence, more than the wisdom of our rulers, interposed and preserved us.

The intention of France was to have attacked us at once in every vulnerable part, to have made a descent upon Ireland with twenty thousand men, to have invaded
Jamaica,

Jamaica, and our settlements in the East Indies. For these purposes ships were constructed in all the dock-yards of the kingdom, and eight thousand men were transported privately to Mauritius. Convinced however by fatal experience that the maritime power of France was far inferior to that of Britain, Choiseul, by means of his creature Grimaldi, prime minister at Madrid, engaged the king of Spain in the same scheme of hostilities. The court of Madrid, equally vindictive, and equally mortified with their late disgraces, entered with eagerness into the design. A numerous fleet was prepared in the harbours of Old Spain *, twenty-five ships of the line were in readiness in the island of Cuba, and the fortifications of the Havanna were rendered impregnable. Still more to facilitate the execution of this pernicious enterprize,

* At Cadiz alone there were fifteen ships of the line, besides frigates, &c. all in excellent condition.

pains were taken to distract the attention of the British ministry, by promoting dissensions at home, and to deprive us of all foreign assistance by intrigues on the continent. The Pretender was secretly encouraged, French and Spanish emissaries were active in Ireland and perhaps in London, and the heart-burnings of discontented Catholics were again renewed. To explain how the enemies of our religion and liberty endeavoured to deprive us of all foreign assistance, is a more intricate investigation, and requires a more minute discussion.

Ever since the conclusion of the peace of Paris, Great Britain has had no ally. But though our ministers have acted wisely in no longer expending the wealth of the nation in paying subsidies to the needy princes of Germany, it would nevertheless have been consistent with sound policy

policy to have secured ourselves against any unexpected emergency by some useful and respectable alliance. Indeed the interests of Russia in particular are so intimately connected with those of England, and an alliance between the two empires have been so long in agitation, that the Czarina would certainly have interposed in our favour, had the circumstances of the times rendered her assistance necessary. It is also well known, that since the beginning of the present century, Russia, having become formidable to her neighbours, has acquired considerable weight in the affairs of Europe; and in particular, that the treaty concluded between the courts of London and Petersburg by the earl of Hyndford, and the march of forty thousand Russians into Germany, intimidated the house of Bourbon, and accelerated the peace of Aix la Chapelle. The duke de Choiseul, a well informed politician, was no stranger to the power and

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influence

influence of Russia, nor to the friendly dispositions of the empress to his Britannic majesty. He knew too that an alliance was actually or nearly concluded between the courts of St. Petersburg, Berlin, and Copenhagen. It was therefore necessary to connect himself with the court of Vienna, ever an enemy to his Prussian majesty, and jealous of the Czarina, and to embrace every opportunity of weakening the power of Russia, and of embarrassing her counsels. The troubles of Poland, in which the empress of Russia was deeply concerned, and which if French politics did not excite, they were assiduous in fomenting, afforded him the opportunity he desired. In order to throw some light on this part of the project, it may be worth while to consider briefly the origin of the dissensions in Poland, and consequently of the Turkish war.

Count

Count Poniatowsky, the present king of Poland, having lived some time in England, accompanied Sir Charles Hanbury Williams in his embassy to St. Petersburg. He was soon after appointed envoy from his own country to the court of Russia. During his residence in that empire he attached himself to the great duchess, and insinuated himself into her favour. This princess, possessed of eminent talents, and actuated by an unbounded ambition, having dethroned her husband who succeeded to the empress Elizabeth, and having invested herself with the imperial dignity, resolved to establish her credit at home and her importance abroad, by governing the affairs of Poland. Accordingly connecting herself with the king of Prussia, and in spite of the efforts of France, Austria, and the Saxon princes, she advanced Poniatowsky to the throne, hoping perhaps that he would co-operate

implicitly in her designs, or imagining that he possessed greater abilities than he has hitherto displayed. Surely no prince has had a fairer opportunity of distinguishing himself as a warrior or politician: he was celebrated by Voltaire, who also celebrated the king of Denmark, and who celebrates all princes that are free-thinkers and that pay him for his adulation: yet Poniatowsky, like some others to whom he has offered incense, has done little credit to his panegyric. He has shewn neither spirit nor patriotism, and is said to be chiefly desirous of amassing treasure, and of securing to himself an independency in some foreign country, should he, like another Stanislaus, be forced to abdicate his unmerited dignity. The empress of Russia having succeeded in giving a king to Poland, continued to act with authority in the affairs of that kingdom. To render herself popular at home, and to lessen the
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influence of Catholic princes among the Poles, she encouraged all those who adhered to the tenets of the Greek religion, or to the principles of the reformation. This party, known in the gazettes of Europe by the appellation of Dissidents, possessed at a former period very considerable privileges. They not only enjoyed the free exercise of their religion, but had voices in the legislation, and were invested with public offices. Supported by the power of Russia, and the favour of the king, they revived their pretensions, and demanded a restoration of their rights. The Catholics took the alarm. The French fomented the quarrel, and thus concurred with the empress queen, who had married her favorite daughter to one of the Saxon princes, and who flattered herself, that by encouraging the dissaffected party, and by dethroning Poniatowsky, she might exalt her son-in-law

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to the throne. Mean while the empress of Russia, depending on the greatness of her power, and not sufficiently aware of consequences, or misinformed by her ministers, acted with violence and precipitancy. One outrage led to another. The dissidents were alarmed, they foresaw the ruin of their country, and willing to content themselves with having the free exercise of their religion secured to them, — withdrew their claim to superior privileges. But Russia having maintained the justice of their demands, thought her honour interested in asserting them, and determined by force of arms to subdue the obstinacy of her opponents. King Stanislaus wavered, he abandoned himself to the advices of the Czartorinskys, who are his relations, and without connecting himself with the confederates incurred the suspicions of the Czarina. Meantime the French were indefatigable, they laid out
immense

immense sums in Poland, and were no less active at Constantinople. They painted in the liveliest colours the growing power of the Russians, and represented how dangerous they would be to the Ottoman Porte should they become absolute in Poland. The Polish confederates added weight to their representations, they supplicated the protection of the sultan, and offered to indemnify him with a part of their dominions. The Turks were easily persuaded, they declared war against Russia, the more assured of success that they expected a diversion in their favour on the side of Sweden: and this expectation was in part fulfilled; for the empress of Russia during the whole course of the war was at a constant expence at Stockholm to counterbalance the French party, and by bribing the nobility and leaders of the Swedish nation, to prevent an attack upon Petersburg, or a descent in Livonia:

Thus

Thus every thing was prepared: the project of the duke de Choiseul was complete in all its parts. The mine was ready to be sprung; and what was the situation of England? She had no ally: and her only friend, in apprehensions from Sweden, and engaged in a bloody and expensive war with the Porte and with the confederates of Poland, was in no condition to assist her. The ministry, totally occupied in paltry quarrels that became of consequence by being regarded, and in exhausting their faculties and their resources in the patriotic purpose of securing their places by securing a majority in the house of commons, were entirely ignorant of the designs of France, inattentive to her proceedings, and unprepared for the attack. The fleets of Great Britain so lately victorious were rotting in their harbours, and the money intended for their support was diverted to other objects. At that instant
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the signal was given for the onset, and a pretence for hostilities was exhibited, by the attack of Spain on the Falkland islands. The ministry stared and stood aghast. So conscious were they of the infamous weakness of their condition, that one man concerned in the navy, a haughty and unprincipled engine of iniquity, in just apprehension of the resentment of an injured people, and in despair as such characters are when they are unfortunate and have no internal resources to support them, killed himself: and another, from whom better things were expected, was obliged to resign a high office, and retire into obscurity. Had he been impeached, perhaps he might have redeemed his memory from an indelible stain, and by unfolding a system of atrocious villainy, might have rendered a greater service to his country, than by his numerous and important victories. Such was the condition of Bri-

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tain; friendless, and without allies, her counsels feeble, alarmed by the discontents of Ireland, harrassed with intestine troubles that became important by the awkwardness of her rulers; her fleets, the bulwarks of freedom and of true religion, gone to decay, and her wealth expended on the greasy electors of corrupted burroughs. The storm approached—and the providence of God dispersed it. At the
 + very moment of the attack, the duke de Choiseul, having incurred the displeasure of madame Barré, was divested of his employments, and his designs were for a time abandoned, because they were of his contrivance. Grimaldi was left alone; his fortitude and his pride forsook him; he advised his master to desist from his enterprize, and the convention was signed with Spain. The blame of the whole affair was cast upon Bucarelli, who was recalled from his government, but who was
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treated at Madrid with the highest marks of distinction.

But though the moment of executing this deep design was neglected, and that by a cause the most precarious and momentary of all causes, the caprice of an insolent female, it was not to be imagined that a scheme so judiciously contrived, so well adapted to the intriguing and enterprizing genius of the French nation, and so admirably calculated to promote the purposes of their ambition, should be entirely relinquished. Accordingly they resumed their project, and encouraged the court of Madrid, galled with the late indignity they had undergone, to persevere in their hostile purposes. Finding that the Russians by the ill conduct of the Turks, and by their want of discipline, were on the point of concluding a peace with the Porte, they resolved to give them

uneasiness in another quarter. They had all along expended incredible sums of money in Sweden, a nation entirely degenerated from the virtue of their ancestors, venal, and unworthy of the freedom they enjoyed, the inveterate enemies of civil liberty, their object was to destroy the constitution of that kingdom, and render their sovereigns absolute. Thus they expected to render Sweden a more formidable neighbour to Russia, and by supporting the royal family in the authority they aspired to, to possess an entire ascendant in the affairs of the nation. The present princes of Sweden are as deserving of eulogy, as most of the other princes of Europe are vicious and contemptible; of amiable dispositions, and endowed with uncommon talents, they are improved by culture and education. The present king of Sweden, inheriting the intrepidity of the Gustavi, with the ambition and enter-

enterprizing genius of the house of Brandenburg, is secret in his counsels, decisive in his designs, and persevering in their execution. He has connected himself with the house of Bourbon, who have encouraged him in his intention of rendering himself absolute, who have supplied him with money, and given him assurances of their support. Trusting to the weakness of the Danish government, it is justly apprehended that he will invade Norway. He will thus have a pretext for maintaining an army, he will intimidate those in his own country who may still adhere to the old constitution; by engaging them in a war he will turn their attention from domestic occurrences, and render himself formidable in the North. Should it happen that his Prussian majesty should embrace his interests, and so connect himself with the French and Spaniards, the consequences may be fatal. A war will necessarily ensue,

sue, and the independency of Europe will be in danger. That a combination of this sort is not improbable, will appear from the following facts and considerations.

A coolness has of late been apprehended between the courts of Vienna and Versailles. The late proceedings of the Austrians at Constantinople and in Poland were without the concurrence of the French: a private treaty concluded between the empress queen and the Ottoman Porte in the summer of 1771 was without their participation: and the project of dismembering Poland is certainly disagreeable to them. For however motives of present conveniency may produce a temporary coalition, the houses of Austria and of Bourbon are naturally rivals, and any increase of power and of territory to the queen of Hungary will excite the jealousy of the French. It

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is also suspected, that the emperor, universally extolled for the benignity of his temper, his love of arms, the simplicity and regularity of his manners, entertains no friendly disposition to the court of Versailles. In consequence of these and other circumstances the French ministry have made advances to the king of Prussia, and have testified their desire of being connected with him. The interests of his Prussian majesty in the present situation of affairs will necessarily determine him to coincide with their proposals. Austria is his natural enemy. He has encreased his hereditary dominions by the addition of Silesia and Polish Prussia, and having already distinguished himself in the field, he will be more desirous of securing his conquests than of augmenting them. For this purpose he connected himself formerly with the empress of Russia, and has payed her a considerable subsidy ever since
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the commencement of the Turkish war. But Russia without the union of England, weakened by the plague, which in the city of Moscow alone carried off sixty thousand inhabitants, exhausted by a tedious and expensive war, with a broken army, ruined fleet, and empty coffers, would prove a very feeble ally. Take even Denmark into the account, what could Russia, Prussia, and Denmark do against the united efforts of Sweden and the house of Bourbon, with whom the Austrians, in the hope of recovering Silesia, would undoubtedly co-operate? It is manifest therefore, that the union of Prussia with France, Spain, and Sweden, is by no means an improbable event.

Imagine the consequences of this combination. Russia, unless compelled by urgent necessity, threatened by intestine troubles, assailed by the gold and intrigues
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of France, and enfeebled even by her successes, will be unwilling for some time to embark in any foreign commotions. Austria, though in a very flourishing condition, is no match for so many enemies. Norway, mean time, falls a prey to the king of Sweden. And it is well known
 X that Norway can at any time, besides land forces, supply her sovereign with thirty thousand hardy and experienced seamen. What an addition to the power of Sweden! and under the dominion of an absolute monarch, in conjunction with France and Spain, what a formidable enemy not only to Russia, but to Great Britain! And will Great Britain, lost to all sense of her former glory, engaged in frivolous disputes, or immersed in pleasures, abandon herself at this critical moment to a cowardly and ignominious indifference? Will she neglect the opportunity now afforded her of asserting her superiority, of blasting
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the ambitious hopes of her enemies, of preserving the tranquillity and independence of Europe, and of deciding the fate of kingdoms?

But how is Britain to interpose? The plan is obvious. Be vigorous. Conclude an alliance with Russia and with Denmark: send a fleet into the Baltic; and compel the king of Sweden either to restore the privileges of his people, or rather (for they are unworthy of independence) oblige him to relinquish his ambitious designs, and embrace your alliance. Prussia will accede. Unless compelled by necessity he will not abandon his connection with Russia. He has no predilection for the French; and when the measures of Great Britain are conducted with resolution, he knows the value of her alliance. A combination with France would probably involve him in a war; but the event of war
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is uncertain ; security is his object ; and an union among the potentates of the North would insure the tranquillity and independence of Christendom.

It may be thought an unpopular measure in the present conjuncture to interpose in defence of Denmark. Let us examine the affair with candour and with all the respect due to an unfortunate princess. The court of Copenhagen, like most other courts, was dissolute and licentious. The sister of our illustrious S—n, young and inexperienced, without a friend to counsel or assist her, was sent from her native country, from the endearments of an affectionate parent, and married to a weak, profligate, and uninstructed boy. Her treatment was such as might naturally have been expected; neglected and even ill used by her husband, she fell into a state of despondency, but her heart was innocent. Then was the time for Great

Britain to have interposed, if she thought her honour interested in the welfare of her royal family, and by acting with becoming dignity, to have rendered an essential service to the unhappy queen. Meantime the king of Denmark, gay, giddy, and beset with flatterers, set out on his travels to foreign parts. In Germany he became acquainted with Struensee, whose father was a clergyman, and who was himself a physician. This man of insinuating manners, unprincipled, and ambitious, engaged himself in the service of his Danish majesty, accompanied him to London and Paris, and made daily progress in his affections. On the king's return to his dominions, he was appointed physician to the queen, and having cured her of an infamous distemper, communicated by her worthy lord, he was easily admitted into her confidence. Upon her favour, and
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on the imbecillity of his master, who, enervated by his excesses, was enfeebled both in soul and in body, he erected the project of his future greatness. His idea was to acquire an entire ascendant over the affections and understanding of the queen and in her name to preside in the administration. His scheme was specious, and he had address and abilities to carry it into execution. A free thinker himself, for what fine gentleman or fine scholar in this age of erudition and ingenuity would be so vulgar as to be a christian? he endeavoured to instill the poison of his pernicious tenets into the unsuspecting heart of Matilda. He practised all the sophistry of modern philosophers to convince her that religion was a mere pretence, and that the immortality of the soul was a fiction invented by priests, and supported for purposes of conveniency by legislators. He assur-

ed her that present enjoyment, and the free indulgence of our desires, constituted the felicity of our being, and that to defer our pleasures for a day, or be deterred from them by fabling ecclesiastics, was to act in opposition to the benign intentions of nature. Suffice it to say, that he succeeded in his designs, and acquired that authority in the kingdom which had been the object of his ambition. He conducted himself for a time with becoming prudence, till inebriated by his prosperity, and by the servile adulation of the Danish nobility, he assumed a tone of superiority that contributed to his ruin. He departed from the wise system of politics adopted during the reign of the late king by count Bernsdorf, and instead of cultivating Great Britain and Russia he was entering into the intrigues of the house of Bourbon. So great was the infatuation of the deluded queen, that deserting the friendship of her native country,

country, she concurred with Struensee in this imprudent connection. Indeed her temper and her demeanor seemed to have undergone an entire revolution, and to have been changed with her principles. She was no longer the amiable, gentle, and engaging Matilda, but was proud, passionate, and overbearing. With her manners she seemed to have abandoned her sex, and appeared as often in the dress of a man as in that of a female. It is not to be wondered at if the spirit of the nation, scandalized and offended, and indignant of being governed by a low-born haughty stranger, who was ignorant of the laws, language, and customs of Denmark, should at length grow mutinous. Accordingly some intriguing courtiers taking advantage, of the public discontents, and using the countenance of the dowager queen and prince Frederic as a pretence (for neither of them have talents) effectuated the ruin
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of the favorite and the imprisonment of the queen. Such are the principal circumstances of the disgrace of her Danish majesty and of the fall of Struensee—Events full of instruction to the giddy and voluptuous, who may see by this relation that no condition, however elevated, can exempt the guilty from infamy, and from the punishment they deserve. Considering the matter in a political light, it is obvious, that the queen of Denmark was no longer a subject of Great Britain, and could claim no protection from her laws. To grieve for her misfortunes was natural, to assist her was necessary, but to interfere in her quarrel would be improper, and to entertain resentment against the Danes absurd.

The Danes in general are well disposed to the English, they cherish the memory of queen Louisa, and mention her
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with fond regret. The present minister, count Osten, is a man of abilities, and though he is accused of duplicity and of an intriguing genius, he knows the interests of his country, and adopts the systems of Bernsdorf. Indeed a connection between Great Britain and Denmark is in the present juncture so necessary, that supposing the court of Copenhagen had offended, all resentment of a private nature ought to be entirely obliterated. The same conduct ought to be observed in regard to the king of Prussia, who is also accused of having treated us with disrespect. In fact so magnanimous, so manly, so consistent have of late years been the measures of the British government, that notwithstanding our laurels and conquests, we have contrived to draw upon ourselves contempt and indignity from every European potentate.

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It may be objected to an alliance with Russia, that it may involve us in a war with Turkey, and so injure our commerce to the Levant. Suffice it to observe, that our interest at Constantinople and our Turkish trade are at present very much on the decline, and that a resolute effort on the part of Britain instead of injuring would re-establish them. But were Great Britain united to Russia, there would be no Turkish war. Intimidated by so formidable an alliance, the Ottoman Porte would never think of hostilities, and would treat both nations with becoming respect. Had an alliance subsisted between his Britannic majesty and the empress of Russia a few years ago, the sultan would never have interfered in the affairs of Poland, that unhappy kingdom would not have been dismembered by its ambitious neighbours, its tranquillity would have been restored, and the dissidents confirmed in their lawful privileges;

privileges; a destructive war would not have desolated the east of Europe; the pestilence would not have wasted Russia, nor alarmed the other nations of Christendom; England would have been regarded as the protectress of Russia, and the friend of humanity; would have been respected at Constantinople, would have established her commerce on a permanent footing, (in so far as the interests of commerce are connected with the dignity of government) would have preserved public tranquillity, and held the balance among the kings of Europe: instead of this, by an irresolute conduct, denominated pacific in the dictionary of our ministers, we encouraged the ravages of war, we suffered the storm to gather and grow formidable. But its evil consequences may in some measure be remedied; the time presses; the hour is critical: and now or never let the wisdom of government be displayed.

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